

THE RELIGIOUS IMPLICATIONS OF DEMOCRACY

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PREFACE

This study is an attempt to look at religion from the standpoint of functional psychology and to show the implications which we may expect to result in religious formulation and practice from the democratic movement of the day. It recognizes the great power of religion in social progress and believes that such power is by no means past. Yet on the other hand it hears the demand made for religious reconstruction and realizes that the highest function of religion is only possible where it is sensitive to the developing life of the day. No attempt is made in this short study at elaborate presentation, but it is hoped that sufficient is given to indicate the great possibilities of development along the line followed. The point of view philosophically is that of pragmatism.

I wish particularly to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor Victor E. Helleberg of the Department of Sociology of the University of Kansas for the suggestions and helpful assistance which he has given in the preparation of the study. To a host of others, crusaders for the new religious spirit, I am indebted; their names cannot be given, but their inspiration and help will be apparent on every page.

Royal G. Hall

CHAPTER 1

THE NEED FOR RELIGIOUS RECONSTRUCTION

"The decay of dogmatic religion is, for good or evil, one of the most important facts in the modern world. Its effects have hardly yet begun to show themselves; what they will be it is impossible to say, but they will certainly be profound and far reaching."

Russell, Principles of Social Reconstruction, p.198.

CHAPTER 1

The Need for Religious Reconstruction.

The most significant aspects of the modern world are those of growth and change. This rapidity of change is a commonplace of our civilization and yet one which cannot be too thoughtfully considered as one examines the life of the day. Only a Rip Van Winkle, arising from a half century of slumber, could realize in any adequate way these changes; changes of which we ourselves living day by day in their midst are unheedful. We, in the stream of progress, are not aware of the old landmarks left behind and of the retreating shore lines. Steam and electricity in the last half century have completely altered social and industrial development and with them all social relations. New scientific developments in the same period have revolutionized men's thinking and have given them a technique by which in increasing measure they are becoming able to manage the forces which shall make a new civilization. The war has accelerated the spirit of change by broadening men's experience and a new social order, with radically different viewpoints and controlling principles looms up on the horizon. Century old economic and political theories are being seriously questioned, philosophical and religious conservatism is being boldly challenged and on every side the social institutions of society are being severely tested.

The spirit of the world seems to have been let loose; it may run wild for a time, but one can pretty safely predict that in time it is sure to work profound changes that will effect the very foundations of our social order. One might well say that in no period have the forces of change been so evident and the tasks so complex as those which call for solution from the leadership of today.

This rapid development in our civilization has been by no means an unmixed blessing. It has brought its trials and its anxieties to all of us; it has created an unrest most significant, most threatening, and yet we may hope most promising. The changes have often come with such speed that we stand almost dumbfounded before the works of our own hands. We live in a changed world; changed in but little over a generation. "We are unsettled to the very roots of our being. There isn't a human relation, whether of parent and child, husband and wife, worker and employer that doesn't move in a strange situation..... There are no precedents to guide us, no wisdom that wasn't made for a simpler age. We have changed our environment more quickly than we know how to change ourselves."¹ Many indeed are aware of a strange inability to handle the forces of the day, few however are conscious of the real reasons for such failure. The world has changed and all its social relationships but our fundamental beliefs and social technique

have been lagards in the change.

In no field of our social life, probably, is a greater reconstruction needed today than in the field of religion. The development of religion has been a natural process, serving as the evaluating element of human life and centering itself about the consciousness of highest social values. The history of religion shows itself to be such a process; as a living movement continually reinterpreting traditional beliefs and creating, usually unconsciously, new beliefs to meet the needs of new social demands. Religion only advances by this continuous reconstruction which adjusts it to reality and makes it function in the life of the day. The Bible, historically considered, is just such a record of continuous adjustments, of growth, of old traditions left behind, of new horizons opened up. Its great men were men who taking the best inherited from the past did not hesitate to make changes which the exigences of the new situation demanded.

There has been a continuously "enlarging conception of God". He grew from the tribal deity of the nomadic inhabitants of the Sinaitic Peninsula - a god manifest in thunder, lightening and natural phenomena - into the nationalistic God of the Jewish People - the Lord of Hosts - the God of Battles - the King of Kings. With the breakdown of Hebrew Nationalism there came in the period of the Exile the idealizing tendencies of Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah. It was only under the IIIIsaiah that there was added the final develop-

ment which gave Him a universal aspect and denied the existence of other gods. The advent of Jesus saw new advancement and new interpretation. God became a Father and his relationship to men found expression in love. Paul, Jewish by birth, but Grecian as well in learning, took the primitive message of the fellowship of the disciples, put it into a theological system that functioned with the thought life of his day, and carried it thru the length and breadth of the Roman Empire. A study of church history shows clearly that every period, consciously sometimes but usually unconsciously, has interpreted in some measure at least its conception of God and of religion.

Today that need of reinterpretation is most evident. The more rapid the changes in thought and life, the greater is the necessity for this reconstruction. Changes were not so insistently demanded in an age that moved with but tortoise like pace, but they come with commanding force in a time like our own of continuous changes. On every hand there is crying need in the religious field for reconstruction and reinterpretation. True, the traditional beliefs appear at a superficial glance to still be strong and gripping the multitudes, but many persons, especially those of the more thoughtful classes are aware that organized Christianity as it is today is largely a matter of traditional phrases and moral conventionalities and lacks the power of effective leadership and dynamic creative life.

Theology from being "queen of the Sciences" has dropped in estimation until one questions its very right to be called a science. In an age when the point of view has shifted from individual to social values, the church, almost completely intellectually, less so practically, has failed to follow the logical demands of such a shift. Christianity is trying to do, often heroically and nobly, twentieth century tasks with mediaeval machinery and mediaeval thought. With scientific thought and experimental philosophy conquering field after field it has tried to hold itself aloft and draw its life from the thought forms of a pre-scientific generation. Religion has lost the power to decide the great questions of human life. It has no clear decisive challenge to the distinctive moral problems of the day. As Dr. W.E.Orchards one of the ablest of the English Religious leaders has declared, "Christianity comes to mean nothing definite, challenging, rallying".

The scientific method and the democratic movement we may, broadly speaking, take as the two great characteristics of the day. The one has created a religious uncertainty, that questions the thought forms of a pre-scientific theology, the other doubts the ethical insight of an undemocratic ethics formulated in centuries past under the sway of autocratic class principles. Recent studies would seem to indicate Christianity as losing its hold on the intellectual leadership of the day. Such leadership is indeed not

anti-religious, often it may be found in organized Christian activities finding thru them a convenient channel for social helpfulness; but it is lackadaisical, uninterested and intellectually far removed from orthodox religion. How wide spread this intellectual dissent may be it is difficult to estimate. If however it is as wide spread as Dr. Leuba's Investigations¹ would seem to indicate it constitutes a real problem the import of which can not as yet be fully realized. That which is the possession of the intellectual leaders of today will become the possession of great numbers in another decade. In Leuba's questionnaire sent to a thousand men of the physical and biological sciences listed in the American Men of Science, to two hundred historians from the membership list of the American Historical Society, to forty eight teachers of sociology and one hundred and forty nine non-teaching sociologists chosen from the members of the American Sociological Society, to one hundred and seven members of the American Psychological Society, he secured some very interesting data. They were questioned as to their belief in God, the kind of a God referred to being that of orthodoxy, one to whom you can pray in expectation of receiving an answer, answer being more than the subjective, psychological effect of prayer. Of the physical scientists 56 per cent were non-believers in such a God, of the biological scientists 63 per cent

¹

Belief in God and Immortality.

were non-believers, of the historians there were 52 per cent, of the teaching sociologists 75 per cent, of the non-teaching sociologists 45 per cent and of the psychologists 76 per cent. An interesting feature of this study is also the fact that the percentage of non-believers among the greater thinkers was considerably larger than among the lesser thinkers. True, this must be considered as a questionnaire, it has been rather severely criticized because of the weakness of that very method; but it is at least significant as indicating wide spread unbelief in what has been considered to be the very pillar of religion. These men were many of them religious men; they worked thru organized Christian activities but they were intellectually at least not in harmony with creedal religion.

The scientific movement, unfortunately, has shown to many only its negative side - the democratic movement on the other hand has appeared as a great positive force generating an ethical idealism that to many appears as superior to that of the church. Democracy and the political movements which to multitudes have the appearance at least of springing from democracy, have in many places taken the place of Christianity. Our working classes, the millions who constitute our skilled organized labor population and the millions of unskilled laborers below them are not to any extent under the influence of organized Christianity. The recent surveys made in our large cities are indicative of a wide spread condition.

These show that the laboring classes are almost untouched. The churches either moved out of such districts or were closed up. In many of our churches not one member of organized labor could be found in the congregation. The studies of Stelzle, Ward and others have shown that organized Protestantism is playing very little part in the life of the rank and file of the class of labor. Conditions are even worse in other countries. Charles Booth ended his minute survey of the religious influences in London with the admission that "the general conclusion is that the great masses of the people remain apart from all forms of religious communion". Canon Alexander of St. Paul's Cathedral in the summer of 1914 declared it to "be his most optimistic calculation that not more than two or three workingmen in every hundred attend any place of worship". It was estimated for Berlin that before the war not more than 2 per cent of the working classes attend the church. On the continent the workingmen neglected by an undemocratic church have turned to Socialism with its great ethical ideal of reorganized society, in England to trade unionism and other forms of class organization. To millions of the workingmen of the world the highest things that they know are in terms of class conscious democratic movements which have all the emotional value and power of religion. This is no doubt more true of Europe than America but that spirit gives every promise of being a very powerful factor

shortly in the life also of this country. Dr. Lake of the Harvard Divinity School in his book entitled "The Stewartship of Faith " has voiced the fear that the ethical idealism springing from democracy may fail to become a part of organized religion but in alien movements shall hold the religious allegiance of the masses. That is exactly the condition which is taking place in Europe; in Germany for centuries considered to be the very fountain of Christian power the moral leadership was more and more being felt to reside not in the organized religious body but in labor and socialist movements.

The recent statistical studies of church membership in this country have been by no means encouraging. This fact is shown in the official census of religion compiled by Dr. H. K. Carroll, and published in the Christian Herald of April 10, 1920. The Interchurch Bulletin, official organ of the Interchurch World Movement, speaking of these statistics says, "The greatest loss was that of the Methodist Episcopal Church which is found to have undergone a decrease in church membership of 69,940 in 1919 and a decrease in Sunday School pupils at home and abroad of 135,000..... Other noteworthy decreases were Presbyterian (North) 32,308; Disciples of Christ, 17,645; Northern Baptist Convention, 9,156; National Baptist Convention, 35,007; Presbyterian (South), 8,811; United Presbyterian, 2,985; etc., etc."¹ The greatest losses everywhere have been among the young people; until the Report of the Federated

¹ See Interchurch Bulletin, April 17, 1920.

Churches is published the exact losses cannot be given, but it has been estimated at three million.

The loss in numbers indeed is not so serious as its loss of power and intellectual leadership. It is possible for a type of religious organization to be strong in numbers and financial power and yet have little moral initiative and stand as an alien in a modern world. Roman Catholicism as it is seen in South America is of such a type. It is reactionary and absolutistic; it inculcates superstitions and dogmas that militate against advancement. In our own land certain types of Protestant Premillenarianism are of the same character. Protestants however as a body can never let themselves become alien to the spirit of the day but must stand for intellectual leadership and spiritual initiative.

This loss of power of organized religion is certain to be far reaching in its results. In a time when industrialism and civilization are going forward with such speed to have religious forces lag behind constitutes a real menace. Organized religion as the expression of the consciousness of the highest social values of the day can be ill spared from our life. Neither can we without danger permit it without danger to give validity only to the social values of the past and fail to realize the ethical significance of the forces that work today. Religion should be as much a part of our lives as government. A civilization great in industrial developments and with its social contacts increased a hundred fold and yet with no effective force for inculcating its highest

values is to be feared. However that will never be: just as one can believe that no individual exists but what is religious so no society will exist without some organized expression of its highest values. The question is primarily what shall be the organized activity that shall further these great human interests. Organized Christianity thru its historical continuity, its emotional idealism, and its profound spiritual leadership of Jesus ought to do this - if it does not the activity will embody itself in some other organization.

The church has proved itself a most potent factor in the development of western civilization. We cannot believe that its day is by any means past. It has functioned as a force of social control by centering the interests of men about the things of most vital importance to the individual and the group. That need still exists today and is one of the most important needs of our lives. Men must see the highest values of the twentieth century life and no organization is better able to bring that to the age than the church. Not only as a conserving force but also on its positive side it has played and must continue to play a great part. It has projected these higher values into consciousness and has sanctioned new values and given to them the great emotional power and richness which goes with religion.

In conclusion, one may say that the need for reconstruction is due to the same demands that have touched every department of human knowledge. New situations and new discoveries demand new formulations of truth. The wide intellectual dissent today, whatever its occasion, makes almost impossible

effective religious advance under a religion of creed or metaphysical principles. The religious interest has moved from creed to service. Men are not primarily interested in the solution of the religious problems of the past but they are keenly interested in the solution of the problems of the day and in anything that shall help them to meet effectively the conditions which confront them. The future might indeed look dark for organized religion if it were not that hopeful forces were already at work; forces which should bring out of this transitional period a more vital and intellectually satisfying formulation of religious truth. We shall proceed to the consideration of these tendencies^e_Λ in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II

THE PROGRESSIVE TENDENCIES IN RELIGIOUS LIFE.

"Today the theologian is facing a world of ideas and aspirations which owe their origin to scientific, social, and industrial activities which have altered the conditions of human living. He must therefore consider the problems of religious belief in relation to all these comparatively new but intensely real factors of modern life, and so formulate Christian convictions that they may enable men to carry their religion into all realms of life."

Smith, A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion,
p. 486.

CHAPTER II

The Progressive Tendencies in Religious Life.

There are today in American Religious life tendencies of positive value; tendencies that are certain to eventually call into being reinterpretations of religion that shall be both scientific and democratic. These forces are meeting, and will doubtless continue to meet, opposition from the more conservative elements of the religious life, but one may well believe that the new movements are slowly and steadily winning their way. They will win because they are in line with the very nature of Protestantism.

Protestantism developed as a revolution against religious autocracy and has carried forces slumbering in its bosom that have continually broken thru the shell of tradition and formalism and have called men to new viewpoints and new endeavors. It has been the faith of the forward looking nations - those who have championed liberty and have been friendly to democracy. Sometimes it has indeed been recreant to its high calling and has allowed conservatism to control it in such a way as to make it irresponsible to the new developments of life, but there has always been the leavening few who sought to preserve the progressive viewpoint that is always to be found more or less in Protestantism.

Any study of present day religious activities shows the distinctive forward trend in Protestantism. The popular religious literature of the thoughtful classes is indicative

of changed interests. The writings of Rauschenbush, Gladden, Peabody, Ward and others have had a wide circulation. They are decidedly different from the individualistic, pietistic type of religious writings of less than a generation ago. These latter writings even though they may not in all cases go the full length of the scientific and democratic demands, show a distinct advance in religious emphasis; for them, the religious interest has shifted from creed and theology to life and from an individual to what they term a social gospel. An examination of our religious magazines shows a decreasing use of expository material centering around ancient scriptural incidents but more and more are they drawing our attention to vital religious demands of our present day life. The new church literature is forward looking; it speaks not in terms of theological creed or religious shibboleth but of character; its test of religious validity is in terms not of orthodoxy but of service. It judges men and movements not by their measure of biblical orthodoxy but by the service they render to human welfare. It speaks for action and is very little interested in theological conceptions or creedal indoctrination.

Not only is this change evident in the more forward looking religious literature but as might be expected it is becoming more marked among the leaders of the church. The scientific thought of the day has obliterated the century old landmarks of religious authority and has given, especially

to the younger leaders an open mind and a scientific outlook which is causing them to search for new religious formulation that will not violate their intellectual integrity. These younger leaders chafe under the ecclesiastic restrictions which hold them and with their increasing numbers they are becoming more articulate in their opinions and demanding more liberality of thought. Their intellectual training is more and more being given the scientific viewpoint and is thus creating a changed emphasis in religious matters. History, political science, economics and sociology are taking a larger place in the intellectual life and have created an interest in the social values of every day life. These men have felt that the great problem of the day is the "Social Problem" and are seeing in increasing numbers the changed type of endeavor which such an outlook presents. They are not so much concerned with saving men's souls for a life hereafter as with making strong, efficient and free their lives here and now. It is true that among many, particularly of the older men, the traditional ideas still hold sway and such efforts are counted as humanitarian not religious, but among the younger leaders at least and among the masses the criterion of religious vitality is becoming more and more social.

These changes have been due not only to the great positive factors in present day thought and activity but likewise to the awakening caused by the breakdown of an

infallible bible. The historical study of Christianity has shown the origin of many of our beliefs and the manner in which they are socially conditioned. Modern day men cannot understand why formulations of Christian truth of centuries ago; formulations which were expressive of the "Zeitgeist" of their time should control a twentieth century society with a radically different thought life and social outlook. This critical attitude has weakened the old conception of Christianity as a perfect revelation of truth which abides substantially unchanged from age to age, and it is being viewed today as a living movement in which every generation is remaking its inherited beliefs into forms more potent to inspire and direct living men. The biblical scholarship has thus been disruptive on the intellectual life of Protestantism and has caused a new endeavor to find unshakeable foundations. The fine biblical scholarship of the generation while it has given us a new book, and eventually a more valuable book, has shown to most thoughtful men the impossibility of much of the old faith which has its foundation on scripture. The day of biblical theology is past - it is a pre-scientific survival in the modern world of biblical criticism and archeological discoveries. A new theology is emerging from the democratic and scientific movements of the day that will eventually put religious life on an entirely new basis. A brief study of some of the developing ideas will show in the clearest manner this

trend evident in theology - a trend as yet not fully realized by any means by the masses of religious people.

This is especially shown today in our viewpoint on such a fundamental theological dogma as sin. It is the basic pillar of traditional theological formulation. The biblical story which in its simple childlike formulation was the foundation of the old conception of sin has been pushed aside by the new empirical definitions. It is treated today as a social conception. Evolution is seen as a process in which men are eliminating the anti-social impulses and tendencies, the sins, and broadening their consciousness of brotherhood and cooperation. We see sin as inadequate socialization; as those qualities of life in individuals and institutions that defeat the great socializing efforts of humanity. The so called "individual sins" we are seeing today from a social background for we are recognizing that nothing is either good or evil "per se" but only as it effects social welfare. The great battles against vice, drunkenness, and all immoralities are being pushed today not only from the sentimental religious angle alone, but, far more successfully from the standpoint of social welfare and group well being. There is also taking place a shift in the conception of what constitutes sin. Dr. Ross in his "Sin and Society" has brilliantly brought the new emphasis to the light. He has shown in a very forceful way that the great sins of today are sins which arise out of the social

relationships of great industrial development and which widely ramify and such the vitality of the age. Today one might go even further and say that the great sins are coming to be viewed as international machinations which doom nations and peoples to war and suffering. This growing conception of sin is coming thru our widened intellectual horizons and the impact of the social sciences and is defining to us sin not in terms of biblical texts but in terms of sociology. The old conception of sin that made man, inherently defective, a dependant upon outside guidance, a miserable sinner incapable of righteousness by nature, is alien to our day. Religious expressions of condescension, unless in hymns the words of which we may not notice, grate on our democratic feelings and are we feel not expressive of our finest ethical insight.

Along with the changing viewpoint of sin has naturally come the changed viewpoint of righteousness. The gradual change of men's thoughts concerning righteousness is splendidly brought out in a recent article by John M. Mecklin entitled "The Passing of the Saint"¹. He shows how in the past the term saint described the highest ideals; moral, spiritual and social of the age. Saintliness was the last word in the catalogue of virtues. As he declares, "the traditional idea of a saint is strangely out of place in a democratic society - for he was a spiritual aristocrat and presupposes a society with fundamental class distinctions". The indifference to

¹ American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 24, No. 4.

existing conditions so characteristic of the best Christian life of the Middle Ages; their unwholesome spiritual life with its morbid introspection; their demoralizing asceticism; all these strike us today as being a type of spiritual selfishness and abnormality. The saint was a saint because he kept himself apart from society- his ethical viewpoints were selfishly individual and unworldly. Today we are realizing that ethical realities are found in the social order and the highest type of life is that which is developed in the give and take of everyday life. The shift of the religious values from the next world to this world has left the idea of the saint far behind and caused his place to be taken by the great workers for human welfare. The physician, who unselfishly devoted his life to develop a great discovery for human welfare - the scientist who in his laboratory toils to find out new formulations of scientific truth - the social worker, who seeks to work out new methods of social technique and control that shall bring harmony and cooperation into the social chaos: all these speak a language which is to us more real and as we believe more religious. As Mecklin has well said, "our Lincolns, our Florence Nightingales, our Booker T. Washingtons seem after all to have caught and interpreted the universal human values of the age".

This changing conception of righteousness is reflected in our views of what constitutes the proper method of solving the so called spiritual tasks of the day. The kinship of the

saint and mystic with the scientific reformer of today seems most remote. Even more so seem the cool scientific observation of facts and their careful working out to the passionate evangelism which saw the solution of all problems thru the saving of men's souls. Yet today nothing is more evident in the religious field than this substitution for the old methods of practical worked out scientific methods. A generation ago when a plague or epidemic came to the community the religious thing to do was to hold a prayer meeting and pray God to deliver them from the epidemic. Today, in more enlightened countries, experts are called in who study thoroughly the means of prevention and cure. An increasing number are coming to believe that that is the religious thing to do, for they are realizing that the scientific method is the religious method. In the fields of criminology, pauperism and all types of delinquency, science is coming to have the vital word. Especially is this shown in the field of charity. From time immemorial alms giving was the great virtue. It fitted in well with the "viewpoint that human life did not make its well or ill, but accepts it from God, or demons or the unsearchable order of things. The best that could be done was to ease the sufferings of the victims. Our present science of charity exists only incidentally to relieve the specific ills; fundamentally its function is to construct and reconstruct the normal and healthy life..... It does this not simply because it has grown wiser thru experience but because

it has a radically different view of human life. It believes that human life individually and collectively is in the main the creator of its own good or ill."¹ This spirit that believes we must thru a scientific method work out a righteous social order is everywhere manifesting itself. The social surveys of the church, the employment of social experts, the extensive system of Americanization projects; all these stand quite in contrast to the old revivalistic methods and indicate a working of the leaven. They are judging the rightness of action more and more not by some comparison with a far fetched scriptural text or by some abstract idea of duty but by the scientific method of considering the consequences that it may entail in society. Gradually there is developing this belief that the scientific solution of life's problems is the religious solution.

Another very important change has become evident in the thought of the Kingdom of God. The conception has gone thru at least two stages in the past and today there is slowly emerging a third idea. To the Christians of the first century the Kingdom was thought of as a supernatural order which was to come to pass thru the destruction of the Kingdoms of this world, the coming of Christ and his inauguration as supreme ruler over the Messianic Kingdom. Every student of the subject is aware that this expectation of the speedy coming of the Millennial Kingdom was a powerful dynamic in first century Christianity. This expectation of the speedy

¹Overstreet, The Democratic Conception of God, Hibbert Journal Vol. 11, p. 399.

coming of the Kingdom not being realized it was pushed into the future and was replaced by the hope of a blessed existence in the life after death in some other world. In an age disturbed, fearful and unprogressive it was also a comforting factor in the period in which it functioned. This has largely been the hope of the majority of the Christian people up till the present time. A new hope of the Kingdom of God is appearing today, one which looks forward with equal expectancy to a reign of love and justice but here on earth. It is significant to note that in one of the most recent and likewise one of the best of the books on religious education, "The Social Theory of Religious Education" by Professor George A. Coe of Union Theological Seminary, the index gives no reference to the Kingdom of God but refers you to Democracy. He says, "I use the term 'democracy of God' in place of 'Kingdom of God' not because I desire to substitute a new social principle for that which Jesus taught, but because the idea of democracy is essential to full appreciation of His teaching. After making all needful allowances for the influence of contemporary political and religious conditions upon his modes of speech and the content of his thought - allowances that are to be determined by New Testament Criticism - the fact remains that his desire for a brotherhood of men leads on with the inevitableness of fate to the ideal of a democratic organization of human society as ... a final ideal."¹

This view of Dr. Coe's is becoming commonplace among the intellectual leadership of the church. The Kingdom is not a supernatural order to be brought about by some divine fiat or in some other life but is to be a human society worked out on this planet. It is a society in which there has come about complete socialization - not thru any supernatural means - but by the continued efforts of men thru education and training. It is not a static thing, a far off goal, but a growing social unity found within the social process itself.

So one might show throughout the entire field of theological thought the great changing interpretations which are becoming apparent; changes which are rooted in a more democratic viewpoint on life and a more scientific study of moral problems. Wide awake thinkers are realizing that this is a changed world from that for which most of the traditional theological formulations were vital and are seeking to bring forth new formulations that are more scientific and democratic.

The new church movements in some respects indicate even greater changes. In life our practices usually run far ahead of our theoretical formulations. Some denominations hold to a very conservative, irrational creed but in their practical application run far ahead of their theories. The great Interchurch World Movement which is being launched this year is probably the greatest united effort ever made by Protestant Christianity. It is the challenge of the churches to the new conditions that have been created by the war. It already contains thirty of the largest denominations in North America and it is expected

that in time it will include practically all the Protestant Christian Churches. Its plan shows the trend of modern day Christianity. It expects to do three things. First: "To undertake a scientific survey of the needs of the world from the standpoint of the responsibility of the Christian Churches". In the accomplishment of this purpose it has called to its work trained social experts and is actually showing by social survey the conditions of society. The Preliminary Bulletin just published by the Survey Department of the Home Missions Division is a fine piece of work - showing thru its charts the actual social conditions which the studies have revealed. These volumes show the distinctly social end that is in view - an end that a generation ago was actually considered no part of religion.

Second: "To project a cooperative community and world program to meet the needs disclosed by the survey". Not only does the movement as we see intend by scientific survey to find the facts but it intends to do something when it has disclosed the conditions that exist. After each section of the survey there is given a section which treats of proposed policies and programs. A typical example is shown in its treatment of Negro Americans. After a short general treatment there are found sections treating of the economic life, housing conditions, health conditions, recreational situation, educational condition and religious life. Each of these subjects is treated; the actual condition illustrated by charts is shown and then follows the proposed policies and programs.

Third: "To discover and develop the resources of personal Christian service, money and spiritual power required by the program as projected." To this end it is seeking to raise within the next five years \$ 1,320,214,555 and to enlist within the same time 100,000 additional workers. They are especially asking for social welfare workers and expect to carry on thru the various denominations represented in the movement extensive social programs.

Individual denominations are in addition putting on extensive campaigns. The New Era Movement of the Presbyterian Church is raising \$45,000,000; the Centenary Movement of the Methodist Church is raising \$135,000,000 and the Congregationalists within the next five years hope to raise \$50,000,000. The other churches are right in line on this forward movement of the Christian forces to create conditions compatible with a new social order.

The interesting thing about all these movements is the fact that their dynamic is coming from a new viewpoint on the world. They are seeing the great social needs of the day; they are realizing that "social welfare" work is real religious work and that the objective of modern day Christianity is a wholesome and righteous social order. These movements are a direct outgrowth of the social and scientific spirit and they are making their appeal to us not primarily on the old traditional reasons but rather on great democratic and social grounds.

In conclusion we can say that the Protestant Churches show that profound changes are taking place; changes that are sure to develop into new demands for religious interpretation. The new practical developments are indicative of changed viewpoints that have unconsciously made themselves felt. Christianity is moving forward under the democratic and scientific stimulation of the day - it knows not whether it is bound but all far seeing men know that the traditional formulations are obsolete and new statements are demanded to back up the the practice.

CHAPTER III

THE PROBLEM OF METHOD.

"To a thinking man a discord between methods is a graver matter than an opposition between doctrines".

Sabatier, Religions of Authority, p. xv.

CHAPTER III.

The Problem of Method.

The last chapter indicated the progressive tendencies to be found in present day Christianity; tendencies that show the scientific and democratic spirit working themselves out in religious practice. Can these fermenting ideas be kept in the old bottles with the "faith once for all delivered unto the saints" or will they demand that new provisions be made? This is the question that is coming with force to disturb the intellectual leadership of the church. They are asking:- Can religion exist at its best in a world of scientific thought; a world in which religious activities are being more and more conditioned by scientific demands, and still continue to find its intellectual sustenance in a metaphysical, supernatural and hence unscientific thought world? Can there be a theology developed employing an experimental and empirical methodology that can break away from the idea of a perfect revelation to that of an experimental philosophy of life based on science and democracy? These questions are fundamentally those of method and as Sabatier has well said "To a thinking man a discord between methods is a graver matter than an opposition between doctrines". The problem of methodology is the crucial problem of religion in comparison with which the problems of miracles, biblical infallibility, Christology and such may be said to be as nothing.

In this chapter an attempt will be made to show the validity of the scientific method in its treatment of religious reality. The very statement of the aim raises the question: What are religious realities? Are they capable of scientific study and formulation or do they fall outside the field of experience and because of that fact a scientific religion is a statement of an impossibility? Mayⁿ indeed declare that religious realities are incapable of complete statement in terms of science because of the peculiar nature of the religious experience. They deny the validity of religious psychology in that field because they say there is a supernatural, "spiritual" element involved which makes impossible complete statement. If such is the case scientific formulation is truly impossible. To a scientist however such a statement is unconvincing. He knows no reality outside of and apart from experience. It is the old problem of the relation of the phenomena and the noumena and the scientific man rightly declares if the religious reality is real it must be a part of experience and as such empirical. "No science can be built upon the assumption of an interaction between two unlike worlds, one of which is knowable and the other unknowable or subject to different laws and categories from the first. There may be, and in fact are many unexplained gaps in the known world, but the scientist does not dare to call in a noumenon to bridge the gap.... Every known element must be susceptible of some sort of an explanation in terms of the rest of the world. That is the condition of its being known".^Q

1 King, Development of Religion, pp.9-11.

Thus we may say that religious realities are like all reality and as such are subject to the same methods of work. Yet religious realities have differentia that separate them into certain classes. They are primarily attitudes, usually social, towards the meanings and values of life.

The genetic studies which have been made by King,¹ Leuba,² Ames,³ Westermarck,⁴ Hobhouse,⁵ Thomas,⁶ Coe,⁷ and others in late years constitute a wealth of material for the study of the origin and development of valuations. Such studies reveal that religious and ethical values have a natural history which can in many cases be traced from the "life preserving activities of the primitive groups" up in modern times where one may see the slowly evolving democratic and scientific religion with its valuations. Present day valuations are just as legitimate as those that arose in the past. Thus the God-idea of every period is as Ames has well shown the ideal embodiment of the social values of that age in which it arose and is in reality no more sacred than one which arises in^{our} own social life and embodies our own social valuations. King expresses the same thing when he says, "The

¹ King, Development of Religion.

² Leuba, Psychology of Religion.

³ Ames, Psychology of Religious Experience.

⁴ Westermarck, Origin and Development of Moral Ideas.

⁵ Hobhouse, Morals in Evolution.

⁶ Thomas, A Source Book of Social Origins.

⁷ Coe, Psychology of Religion.

dogmatic concepts of the religious life rests upon the unevaluated experience or rather they are the outgrowths of an experience that belongs to an earlier stage of culture".¹ Such sociological study reveals that religion is not an alien in our world; it is not some supernatural intruder into our mundane life, but like everything else it has a history and can be genetically traced in the racial evolution. Religious knowledge is of the same general type as all knowledge and is subject to the same formulation. Geiger writes, "Religious knowledge, then, is not different from any other sort of knowledge. It is instrumental or functional. It is primarily concerned with creating values. To this end it employs descriptive judgments as well as judgments of practice. But this is not all. If motive and technique, ends and means, evaluations and descriptions are truly reciprocal, the formation of religious motives and ends, the actual process of judging religious values must itself be capable of scientific control".²

Thus we find that religious reality is like any other reality and just as capable of scientific formulation and control. Yet we find many denying this fact and approaching it from another angle. They deny the validity of science aside from a descriptive service - as a statement of connection of conditions - and put over against it some such transcendental

¹
King, *ibid*, p.19.

²
Geiger, *Some Religious Implications of Pragmatism*, p.30.

faculty as conscience or intuition. Thus we have the antithesis between a world of description or explanation and a world of values or appreciation and again we are back to a dualism. This is due as Dewey shows to too narrow an interpretation of scientific. "Scientific" as applied to a method of investigation means primarily not the results that are obtained - not a body of knowledge such as in chemistry and physics - but it means the method of inquiry. The material which is subjected to investigation will determine the results; in chemistry and physics it may bring results that would find explanation on a mechanical basis but in religious and ethical valuations it would not necessarily follow. "Scientific treatment of any subject means the command of an apparatus which may be used to control the formation of judgments in all matters pertaining to that subject".¹ The attempt to distinguish sharply between the so called normative and descriptive knowledge can not be validly held. Every ethical system must have a concrete content and therefore presupposes the possibility of descriptive knowledge, likewise every judgment whether it be normative or descriptive as Dewey has shown "is in its concrete reality an act of attention, and like all attention, involves the functioning of an interest or end and the deploying of habits and impulsive tendencies ... in the service of that interest."² All our thinking and judgments

¹
Dewey, The Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Morality, p.126.

²
ibid, p.124.

have some normative value otherwise there would be no attempt at readjustment. The distinction of normative and descriptive may be a convenient device, but it can only be used in a rough way and cannot be treated as an ultimate distinction.

Having considered the objection that the subject matter of religion is by its very nature a priori impossible of scientific judgment because it is in a realm outside of experience and that the distinction between 'descriptive' and 'normative' cannot be validly held, we may next take up what demand the scientific theory makes. The scientific method in religion means as has already been brought out "the command of an apparatus which may be used to control the formation of judgments in all matters appertaining to that subject". It is the means for accomplishing a purpose - it functions in mastering the environment and bringing to pass desired ends. Because of its instrumental use in bringing about desired ends - the desired concepts or categories will have to be of the kind useful in that particular field, remembering always that these formulae or categories are of only functional and not of metaphysical validity.

Religion has already many of these categorical terms; terms such as God, sin, righteousness and duty, but they have a content which is conditioned by their transcendental origin and are incapable of use unless their value is estimated thru a sociological study of the situation in which they emerged and can thus be revaluated in terms of our own life. We have seen

from the last chapter that that is exactly what is taking place; terms such as sin and righteousness are being empirically arrived at and being given a new validity. Objection may indeed be made to the use of these concepts as for example God when the meaning which it is wished to convey is not existential but functional. The history of language however reveals that this is the common method of advance, in fact, every experience sees a changed meaning in a word and to hold to any static meaning is to make it unusable.

The possibility of control over religious judgments is found only as the attitudes, motives, and dispositions of the judger are capable of psychological analysis - for in an ethical judgment the judger is engaged in judging himself. Our popular consciousness is aware how largely our psychical dispositions modify our ethical judgements. Habits, desires, and emotions all tend to color our ethical judgments and all these subjective elements must be treated objectively. Dewey says, "If character or disposition reflects itself at every point in the constitution of the content finally set forth in judgment, it is clear that control of such judgments depends upon ability to state in universalized form the related elements constituting character an objective fact. Our particular judgments regarding physical things are controlled only in so far as we have, independent of and prior to any particular emergency in experience, a knowledge of certain conditions to be observed in judging every physical object as physical. It is thru reference to such laws

or statements of connected conditions, that we get the impartiality or objectivity which enables us to judge in a particular crisis unswerved by purely immediate considerations. We get away from the coercive immediacy of the experience, and into a position to look at it clearly and thoroughly. Since character is a fact entering into any moral judgment passed, ability of control depends upon our power to state character in terms of generic relation of conditions, which conditions are detachable from the pressure of circumstances in the particular case. Psychological analysis is the instrument by which character is transformed from its absorption in the values of immediate experience into an objective, scientific fact".¹

Such an analysis of the individual attitudes and dispositions must be supplemented by a sociological analysis of the religious judgment since these judgments are largely social as to nature. We can call into service for such analysis any kind of scientific investigation which may prove fruitful in giving us in connected form the connection of conditions which prevail. Religion and social values are to be subjected to the same intense scrutiny by which the scientific method has produced its wonderful discoveries.

The modern world is the product of the scientific method. The power of civilized man has come from his realization that by doing certain things and following certain formulae certain results may be secured. " The recognition that

natural energy can be systematically applied thru experimental observation to the satisfaction of concrete wants that is doubtless the greatest single discovery ever imported into the life of man, save perhaps the discovery¹ of language". The studies of biologists in the past have been largely concerned with the evolutionary process itself and not in attempting to actually create evolution. But today we find a change coming about among the scientific students. Rather than simply tracing the course of evolution and showing how 'nature' has in her wasteful way caused thru selection the development of species more adapted to the environment, they are taking up the constructive side and from an experimental study are gaining sufficient control to actually set out scientifically to produce certain results. When Burbank wishes to create a spineless cactus or a wilt resisting plum he deliberately and scientifically sets out to do it and with what success we are all aware. The eugenist can scientifically formulate what will be the result of certain human matings and the control thus attained is of great value in the handling of certain human defects such as feeble-mindedness and some types of deaf mutism and insanity. These things are of course only the commonplace of our lives. We can expect eventually the same development in the field of valuations. Already there has been worked out the 'natural history' of many of these. Ethics has been largely of the descriptive, evolutionary type tracing the course of

¹
Dewey, Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and other Essays, p.58.

development rather than of the creative type. But when this field has been thoroughly covered and the process revealed we can anticipate the same constructive efforts here as in the physical sciences. There will result a scientific formulation of what constitutes the highest social ends. These highest social values will thus be found not in supernatural revelation or introspection but in the actual workings of the social order.

With the development of sociology over wider and wider fields of life, and the bringing under objective form of the different conditions, we can hope in an increasing measure to secure that mastery over the social order that characterizes the control we possess over the physical order. We have been able to gain such a knowledge over the connections of conditions in the physical realm that we can foresee and bring to pass the desired ends - but we are still woefully at the mercy of tradition and habit in the fields of human values. Science is no longer going to tamely submit to the traditional excommunication that would assign it only the purely existential and physical sciences but is boldly demanding that it shall have the deciding voice as well in the social values. What is right shall be decided not by tradition, supernatural revelation or introspection but by a careful study thru the scientific method of the social order itself. As was indicated in the previous chapter we are already in actual life deciding thru such a method even if theoretically we stand on other grounds.

In conclusion, we may say the scientific method in religion avows as its purpose the discovery thru the use of modern science of the fundamental social values and to project these ideal desired ends so that they may become the organizing and controlling factors in human life. Its methodology would likewise be empirical and experimental as that of modern day science. It would throw aside eternal, static, absolute ideas whether they had their source in revelation or in metaphysical abstraction and would stand out on a relative, growing, reality finding its source and its being in the social process itself. It would discard any methodology that sought to solve the problem thru an appeal to supernatural aid but would courageously stand for a world which is capable of control thru the developing intellect of man.

The progressive development of man has witnessed the increasing control of man over his world. From living in passive submission to this environment he has become its master. Control has come more and more to center in man's intelligence and he has come to realize that he is the master of his own fate and that the world which he desires cannot come by any intervention of the gods, but by his courageously working it out. He has come "to recognize that the existing order is determined neither by fate nor by chance , but is based on law and order, on a system of existing stimuli and modes of reaction, thru knowledge of

which he can modify the practical outcome."¹ As Dewey goes on to say, "We can anticipate with the application of the scientific method no other outcome than inoreasing control in the ethical sphere - the nature and extent of which can be best judged by considering the revolution that has taken place in the control of physical nature thru a knowledge of her order"¹.

¹

Dewey, Psychology and Social Practice, p. 39.

CHAPTER IV

THE MEANING OF DEMOCRACY.

" The history of modern times from the point of view of political science is the history of the growth of democracy; from the point of view of social psychology it is the history of the growth of the social consciousness."

Follett, The New State, p. 359.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MEANING OF DEMOCRACY.

The two most important characteristics of the modern world are, as has already been indicated, the scientific method and the democratic movement. The last chapter showed the relation of the scientific method to the problems of moral and religious valuation; in the present chapter an attempt will be made to show the significant development of the democratic movement thru a study of its growth, psychological basis, task and implications preparatory to further consideration of its application to the field of religion.

No one surely can question the tremendous part which democracy plays in our modern world. It carries with it the highest loyalties of our national life and is rich in its emotional significance. We fought the war "to make the world safe for democracy". We used it as a slogan to enlist millions of men and raise billions of dollars. It is the word which has the power to kill or to glorify any institution or movement. It is the most powerful idea in the world and has that power which Comte declares of an idea "To govern the world, or throw it into chaos". No one can seriously doubt that in the present social movements, characterized as they are by unrest, questionings and even violence, there is to be found much that is disquieting, even alarming, yet despite these pathological conditions one should see them as in part, also, the evidence of an expanding democratic spirit and as such welcome them as signs not of social decadence but of

social promise. The democratic spirit is in the air and with all the power which a great idea is capable of generating. That some pathological conditions should result is to be expected for great progress usually carries that as part of the price but eventually we can believe that significant results of benefit must come from its expansion.

But what is this power which is bursting out with such force into the world? The vagueness and looseness with which the term is used calls for a thorough study of it. We have talked, preached and harangued for democracy; we have even fought, lived and died for it, but we have usually never stopped to define it. We felt it as part of the "Zeitgeist", as our great political tradition received thru the social heritage and loyally contended for it both in word and deed. Like many of the great loyalties which call for our devotion we have never stopped to define it. But such is not sufficient. An unexamined loyalty is often a dangerous loyalty - it can inspire passionate and fanatical allegiance but is not open to discussion and may prove dangerous.

Even when we find those who can define democracy we discover their definitions to be inadequate. We hear it popularly said; "Democracy is a form of government, a type of political institution"; it is that indeed but it is more than that. We hear, in the words of the Declaration of Independance, that it consists of "certain inalienable rights; such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"; it includes these we may hope, but not on the ground of any

natural right. Neither is democracy a goal or an ideal in the sense of being outside the social process - some abstract entity; it may truly be a goal or an ideal but it is a moving ideal and one that has the basis of its conception in the actual social order itself. It is not an institution but a process; not a political mechanism but a type of association. It is as Miss Follett says "not a problem in addition" where thru a compounding of separate individuals there is built up a social whole called democracy; rather it is the integration and interpermeation of individuals in a social process. It is not the old individualism of our revolutionary forefathers, who had an a priori theory of natural rights, and came together to form a government which should protect these inalienable rights inherent in man; rather it is a psychical process, a way of living together and developing the social whole thru cooperation and mutual interaction. It is not an abstract equality but it is the freedom of opportunity for each to perform his service in the social whole. It is not liberty in the sense of individual freedom but it is the freedom which comes with membership in a group which focuses itself in the individual. The typical expression of democracy is not thru the word government but thru the term synthesized social consciousness.

The growth of democracy is the growth in social consciousness. "The central fact of history" says Cooley, "from the sociological point of view may be said to be the gradual enlargement of social consciousness and rational cooperation.

The mind constantly, though perhaps not regularly extends the sphere within which it makes its higher powers valid. Human nature, possessed of ideals moulded in the family and the commune, is ever striving, somewhat blindly for the most part, with those difficulties of communication and organization¹ which obstruct their realization on a larger scale." To trace this growth of social consciousness is to trace the development of democracy. The family, and the other face to face groups - primary groups which are practically universal - were the first centers of socialization. The intimate associations of such groups, involving mutual adaptation and adjustment in cooperative activities were great factors in socialization. The common "we" spirit of the group became the spirit of the individual who found his life and liberty in the higher group whole.

The origins of democracy we might say were far back in these primary groups. The small groups of primitive societies were largely primary groups and in them we can see the beginnings of democracy. In the descriptions of Tacitus of the primitive German Tribes we see that the affairs of the tribes were conducted by the assembly of the people. "On affairs of smaller moment, the chiefs consult; on those of greater importance the whole community; yet with this circumstance, that what is referred to the decision of the people is first maturely discussed by the chiefs.... Then the king or

¹
Cooley, Social Organization, p.113.

chief, and such others as are conspicuous for age, birth, military renown or eloquence are heard, and gain attention rather thru their ability to persuade than their authority to command. If a proposal displeases, the assembly rejects it by an inarticulate murmur; if it prove agreeable, they clash their javelins; for the most honorable expression of assent among them is the sound of arms"¹. A study of primitive society reveals the wide spread nature of these simple democratic institutions. The increasing size of groups and the inadequacy of communication in the absence of face to face contacts; the increasing prestige of individuals resulting from the centralization of power necessary for war; along with other historical and economic causes broke down the primitive democracy of early group life and developed the autocracy which centered around certain individuals and classes. Its rebirth in the 18th Century under the individualistic natural rights philosophy of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau created a type of democracy but one which was legal, contractual and individualistic rather than psychological and social. The democracy even of our own day is largely of this type which remains, partly unconsciously, at the basis of most of our political thought.

Psychologists and advanced political thinkers are today growing away from the democratic theory founded on natural rights. These natural rights which our forefathers thought of

¹ Tacitus, Germany and Agricola. (Oxford Trans.) pp.16-17
Quoted by Gillin, Origins of Democracy, Am. J. of Soc. Vol.24, p. 705.

as donated to every individual because of his inalienable rights as a human being proved powerful factors in their day. The psychological thought of that day, built as it was on the Cartesian idea of the self consciousness and formulated under the sway of rigid mathematics resulted in the individualistic democracy of the American Constitution. It was a negative type of democracy, a government of checks and balances devised to prevent too much governmental action.

The new social psychology with its conception of the self as a social product boldly challenges the individual conception of the person as over against the group and declares they are complementary and indispensable to each other. It declares the individual with his natural endowment of absolute, inalienable rights is an abstraction aside from the groups in which his personality has been built up. Such things are not donations from outside the social order - the only rights we know are those which are achieved in the social order. Human nature itself is as Cooley says, "not something existing separately in the individual, but a group nature or a primary phase of society, a relatively simple and general condition of the social mind.... Man does not have it at birth; he cannot acquire it except thru fellowship, and it decays in isolation."¹

The real starting point for democracy then is not the individual with his inalienable rights but rather social

¹
Social Organization, pp. 29-30.

consciousness as it manifests itself in the life of the face to face groups such as the family or neighborhood groups. Start with the individual as a unit and you have a contractual, mechanical type of democracy, one which consists of such adjustments as shall permit of each individual living out his natural rights thru certain legal restraints. Government thus becomes negative and individualistic. Start with the group as the unit, and you have a type of democracy based on group psychology and resulting from a sense of oneness; a democracy in which the binding element is not primarily law but the evolving group consciousness found in the social process itself. Government thus becomes something positive, not something existing apart from the group life but the organized social consciousness itself.

The tracing of the growth of this social consciousness is the tracing of the democratic movement. "A right democracy" as Cooley says "is simply the application on a large scale of those principles which are universally felt to be right as applied to small groups - principles of free cooperation motivated by a common spirit which each serves according to his capacity"¹. Democracy we may say is the natural group organization where normal conditions prevail and where facility of communication make possible the formation of social consciousness or public opinion. It is a growth, an achievement, not something we can set up thru abstraction, but can only

¹ Social Organization, p. 118.

grow out of the actual social process itself. Democracy we may call as does Dewey "more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience".¹ This being the case the more nearly the type of machinery thru which democracy expresses itself permits every man's contribution to be integrated in the larger social consciousness or public opinion the more nearly it serves the ideal purpose. Democracy as the rule of the majority is the best expression today that we can give of public opinion, but in an ideal democracy it would be the rule of all as synthesized in a whole which embraced all opinions. Miss Follett in her book "The New State" has most ably carried out this idea. She speaks of the political fallacy of majority rule and suggests the proper approach to a real democracy is to be found in the small local groups. These neighborhood groups in which people should so organize themselves as to express their daily life should become the recognized political units. Thru integration of these groups into larger and larger groups could be developed the national and eventually the international groups. Possibly this idea of Miss Follett might be supplemented by the idea of occupational groups as well; thus bringing about groups integrated along the line of economic activity.

The great task of democracy is the making possible of the most complete synthesis of many divergent experiences

¹
Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 101.

into one whole. Thru discussion there must arise an integration which represents and is the cooperative thought of the group. Only in this way can real public opinion be built. Thus ease of communication, adequate and truthful information on public questions, and freedom of speech and press are necessary in the development of public opinion which when organized is the real democracy. The creation of means by which interchange of experience and ideals may be facilitated, the development of instruments of political activity that make for more direct government and allow in increasing measure the voice of the minority to be heard; all these are steps in the right direction. The task of socializing the groups which has made great headway in the primary groups must be carried into the larger and larger social wholes. This extension of socialization thru wider synthesis is the task of democracy.

The sovereignty which is found in such a democratic organization is not that which is external to itself but that which is self determined and arises from the social process itself. The guidance which a democracy has is a self created guidance. "We are coming to the new thought that society is guided - if we may use that word - not by kings or class,¹ but by the infinite action and reaction of all its members".

This stands directly opposed to the old natural rights democracy. As Geiger says, "Personality is never given as a

¹ Overstreet, The Democratic Conception of God, Hibbert Journal, Vol.11, p. 402.

natural and inalienable endowment; it has to be achieved. And it is the task of a democratic society to achieve it in the persons of its members. To this end, the members of such a society must share in full the social and moral responsibilities involved. If the government is to be for the people, it must be of the people and by the people. And it is the spectacle of a people leading themselves and thereby achieving larger capacity for leadership, realizing new qualities of personality, that presents the goal and poses the problems of true democracy".¹

This sense of reliance upon the life of the group is at the very heart of democracy. The feeling is growing that it is "by taking thought that humanity can master its fate and captain its soul". The social and scientific point of view is in increasing measure creating the social values and pointing out the way for adequate social control. "The successful issues of social intercourse, with all the ways and means devised for making these possible, have given rise to a freer spirit, a social idealism, a moral venturesomeness, which is ever devising new ways and means for affecting other prosperous issues of social life, for realizing new social values. And it is this social idealism, this moral venturesomeness, objectifying itself thru methods and achievements of science, that furnishes the new democracy with its motive power and fills it with hope for the future."¹

¹
Geiger, Some Religious Implications of Pragmatism, p.46 -47.

Not only must democracy create the machinery which shall make possible easy interchange of ideas and thus the building up of a real public opinion thru the integration of individual and group experience but it must also create a faith in itself. Democracy has as its belief that humanity must work out its own salvation and this calls for increasing faith and loyalty to the greater wholes of which each of us is a member. If there is no dependance on other classes, nor on a power other than itself, it must mean that education and all social heritage be organized so as to create faith in humanity and in humanity's ability to manage and control its own destiny. No little task confronts democracy in developing thru its educational means the faith in its aims and its endeavors. The example of Germany witnesses to the power of the educational system. "If false ideals can be stamped upon a people by education, so that they are willing to live by them and die for them, so can true ideals.... If the German system of education could in our generation create in them a willingness to sacrifice everything for the empty illusion of power - then we ought to be able in a generation to prepare men for democratic citizenship."¹

Democracy is as some one has well said the great adventure. Its method is the method of trial and error and as such it shows its relationship to the scientific spirit of the day. It shuns all cut and dried schemes that may be patronizingly

¹ Boodin, Education for Democracy, School and Society, Vol. 7, p.726.

given by external authority and prefers to work out its own salvation even at the cost of mistakes. It knows no short cut methods to the millenium but by patient toil, cooperation and education it hopes to lift itself thru its very imperfections. It looks with distrust upon any ideal society that does not base its conceptions upon actual existing conditions and promises to be practicable. It puts its trust in human nature as a whole and believes that to remain under the tutelage of any class or individual, or any cosmic force outside of man himself with his intellectual powers, is to be weaklings and not to develop the best that humanity is capable of. It believes "man's life and man's world are man's achievement". It is heroic in its faith in men and believes in the words of Lincoln "that no man is good enough to govern another man without that others consent".

Do not these thoughts, vague indeed though they may seem in some of their implications, constitute the real vital meaning of democracy? And imperfectly, blindly sometimes, are we not striving to realize them in the life of the day. We are indeed a long way from the ideal - our progress sometimes seems pitifully slow and halting - but after all the world is moving in that direction and seeking to realize the spirit, however inadequately, in increasing measure.

CHAPTER V

THE THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF DEMOCRACY.

"The ideas of democracy and of the Great Society are undoubtedly the greatest moving ideas of our time. No leader can hope today to stir the deepest moral sentiments of the world without speaking in their name."

Perry, *The Present Conflict of Ideas*, p. 111.

* * * *

"An ethical theology, which in all sincerity asks the questions which are pressed from the hearts of men; which in its questioning uses fearlessly the best methods which critical science can furnish; which insists on no aristocratic privilege or definitely limited authoritative doctrines, but admits gladly to its precincts anything which compels the moral adoration of men; which learns gratefully from the past, but looks to a better future; which appreciates the service rendered by these conceptions of God and of salvation which have emerged in history, but confidently believes that the borders of our knowledge may ever be enlarged; such a theology will not be the poorer, but will rather be richer than the ecclesiastical system."

Smith, *Social Idealism and the Changing Theology*, p.243.

CHAPTER V

THE THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF DEMOCRACY.

Our contention in the first chapter was that religion must be thought of in terms of relationship to the things of highest value. It is an attitude which embodies the idealization of the things of most importance to the individual and the group. The aim of this chapter will be to show the implications of the highest ideals of this age, which we believe to center in democracy, upon the theological formulation of the religious experience.

Before developing this thought, it might be expedient to show that we are not attempting anything more than humanity has been doing for centuries. The history of religion reveals thru a genetic study just such a growth of the evaluating attitude which we call religion. Further more we find this valuation centers about the controlling ideas, valuations, and thought forms of the period in which they arose. In primitive life they centered about the food interests and activities connected with the vital needs of the group. Every advance in social life and social organization affected the religious valuation. The thing that was most highly prized that became the thing of religious significance. Especially is this shown in their ceremonies and rituals. Thus Rivers has shown in the case of the Todas, a small Asiatic Tribe of India whose life is dependent upon the milk of their cows, that the milking and operations connected with the

milking constitute the major portion of their religious ritual. As he says, "The ordinary operations of the dairy have become a religious ritual and ceremonies of a religious character accompany nearly every important incident in the life of the buffaloes."¹ This is not an isolated incident. Travellers and ethnologists all speak of the religious ceremonials connected with the things which are of vital consequence to the life of primitive peoples. This is shown for example in the case of the Eskimo with the seals, the Indians with the bear, buffalo or deer, the Malay with the rice and the Central American Roman Catholics with the planting of the corn. The recent writings on Old Testament history reveal such ceremonies as forming the basis of much of Hebrew Religious History. The writings of Barton,² Wild,³ W.R. Smith,⁴ Brinton,⁵ H.P. Smith,⁶ to mention only a few, have traced very interestingly the ceremonial development of Judaism. The social symbols, rituals, and sacrificial worship all centered about the things of most vital importance as the lamb, the meal, the wine and the oil. The history of the Hebrew people presents

1

The Todas, p. 38.

2

Sketch of Semitic Origins.

3

Evolution of the Hebrew People.

4

Religion of the Semites.

5

Religion of Primitive Peoples.

6

The Religion of Israel.

as Dr. Ames shows the whole range of progress from savagery to civilization. Their social advance was expressed in their religious life and worship. The very earliest worship seems to have centered about springs, animals, sacred mountains, unusual stones, in fact anything that excited wonder or was of unusual value. Possibly the next stage in their advancement came when as nomadic shepherds the sheep became the most important animal and was held as sacred. The Passover Feast of this day among the Jews is a survival of this stage as is also our symbolization of Jesus as the Lamb of God. "In this stage the sacrificial animal was the god and those who feasted upon it thereby gained its magical qualities. This nomadic shepherd life and the consequent deification of the sheep was characteristic of the tribes of the stepes"¹. With the later development of the Hebrew people into herds-men when the interests centered about the cattle, their god who had become known as Yahweh took on the symbolism of a bull. The next stage was one in which the god-idea became anthropomorphic and the animal shape began to disappear. This was the result of the unification of the different tribes and the arising of kings. They were the center of the values and God came to be conceived as a Monarch. He was no higher ethically than the social consciousness of the day; in fact the idea of the Oriental monarch was its foundation.

¹

Ames, Psychology of Religious Experience, p. 173.

Sacrifice to secure the help of the controlling deity became a central fact and the relationship of subject to king is very fully typified in the relation of the individual and the group to the deity. This stage would hardly be called monotheism, rather monolatry. The step to monotheism, especially of an ethical type, came thru the efforts of the prophets of the eighth century before Christ. Amos and Hosea represented the simple nomadic group consciousness, more ethical because it was nearer to the democratic life of the primitive primary groups. They contested with the aristocratic, luxurious, easy going life of the cities. As Amos says "They put into definite contrast two sets of customs, the simple mores of the deserts over against the elaborate mores of the city and country; and they formulated their own mores into general principles as conditioning the welfare of the people and the destiny of the nation."¹ In other words they ethicalized the God-concept with the social consciousness of the primary group life of the desert. They voiced the principles of the simple face to face groups. They visioned a Kingdom of God - one where the poor, the lame and the afflicted would have a chance. "All the prophets of this period picture a people with two extremes of society; a newly rich class quite taken off their feet by their recent gains, dwelling in self indulgence and indifferent to consequences, and a poor peasant class ground under the heel of the prosperous and exploited on all sides by the unscrupulous ruling classes."² The prophets stood for the simple

¹ ibid, p.179 ² Wild, Evolution of the Hebrew People, p.205.

democratic life of the desert groups and the great work of the line was the ethicalizing of the aristocratic, monarchial God-concept representative of the conservative mores of the upper classes of the country. Meanwhile the international situation had also broadened the horizon of the prophets and began to conceive God as universal in aspect. The development of the whole God-concept thru the time of the prophets is a splendid illustration of the growth of the social consciousness along certain lines which were initiated and contended for by Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah and others.

The legalistic period began in the Babylonian Exile and reached its climax in the fifth century before Christ. The people came under the conservative power of a book religion. The power of legalism was challenged by Jesus of Nazareth. He was a child of the prophetic movement and opposed the legalistic formalism of the ritualistic religion with the simple faith of the primary groups; emphasizing love, purity, and righteousness. "The Golden Rule springs" as Cooley says, "directly from human nature".¹ The qualities which Jesus emphasized; kindness, love, sympathy, are the outstanding qualities of the simple primary groups and the heart of Jesus' interpretation of God was in just such broadly human terms.

One might if time were sufficient trace thru to the present day the results of the social consciousness on the religious formulation. Studies of the great doctrines of

¹
Social Organization, p. 40.

the church such as aton^ement, salvation, forgiveness, sin and righteousness would each reveal that they are fundamentally the product of the social thought life of the day in which they originated. Thus we believe in attempting to show the implications of the prevailing social consciousness today as regards religious conceptions we are but repeating what humanity, usually unconsciously, has been doing for thousands of years. The history of civilization is not static but developmental and that development has been parallel with the social consciousness of humanity.

In the last chapter we developed the meaning of democracy. We declared it to be the great driving force of the modern world and to represent the greatest moral ideal in civilization. If we are correct in our declaration then religious conceptions if they are in any adequate way to represent the great vital realities that move twentieth century men must embody them. The writer does not believe that such a development will take us far from the heart of Jesus' message because he believes that the heart of his message came from the mores of the primary group just as he believes the development of democracy is nothing but the wider application of those principles found to control life in such groups. The attitude of good will, the practice of the Golden Rule, the teaching of universal socialization; all these, the heart of Jesus' teaching are likewise found at the very heart of democracy.

But organized Christianity as at present seen is also

a matter of doctrine, practice and formulation. Such theological doctrines arose in an age of imperialism and autocracy and are not by any means interpretive of the spirit of democracy. Theology is only the explanation of religion, scientific generalization whose purposes are instrumental and functional. It is the attempt to formulate into doctrines or categories the experiences that are known as religious. In other words by our definition of religion it would mean that theology is the scientific formulation of the great social values of humanity, and their use, as in the case of all scientific generalizations, as means of control and of further advance in valuation. As Geiger has said, "The program for the new theology, then, would amount to nothing more nor less than the definition of fundamental social values, and the methodology to be employed would of course develop in accordance with empirical and experimental canons."¹ We have seen that the fundamental social values of our life reach their highest development in the conception of democracy. If our contention is valid that the divine as shown by its development, owes its content not to any transcendent, extra-experiential object to which it is supposed to refer by way of representation but to the social milieu in which it functions, then our first task must be to show its relation to the idea of God.

The current conception of God was formulated under the control of autocratic and imperialistic ideals. God is the

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ibid, p.38.

absolute, complete in Himself, doing what He will with His subjects, and man is in the state of dependence and inherently sinful and needing guidance. All the rights of man are not those which he has self achieved thru toil and struggle but the benevolent condescension of God. Such an autocratic God is out of harmony with the spirit of the twentieth century. He does not represent the valuations of our own day. It speaks the valuations of a day which did not have faith in men. Such a God may carry the loyalty of predemocratic and prescientific generations but it cannot satisfy a democratic period like our own. As President McGiffert of Union Theological Seminary¹ has said: "Benevolent despotism becomes God no more than man."¹ Democracy has by no means come to its own in government, less so in industry, and scarcely at all in religion. "An autocratic deity is still worshipped in practically all our American churches. The official deity of every denomination, sect, and religious group is an Autocrat, supremely benevolent but supremely arbitrary in his control. He rules according to principles of morality, but this moral system is not of democracy. It is static, fixed for all ages past and for all to come. The moral principle of democracy is not of this nature. This irreconcilable antagonism between moral principles is the most serious problem the new religious order will have to face in the transformation from the old."²

A fixed, static, absolutistic God stands directly

1 Christianity and Democracy, Harvard Theol. Rev. Vol. 12, p. 49

2 McAfee, Religion and the New American Democracy, p. 58.

opposed to the democratic spirit. The spirit of democracy knows nothing static, infallible or external to itself. As we have said it puts its trust in human nature as a whole and believes that to remain under the patronizing tutelage of even a benevolent God is unethical and subversive to the highest development of humanity. It asks no more for heavenly charity than for earthly alms. It prefers values achieved in its own process of trial and error to any transcendental values vouchsafed by an absolutistic deity.

A democratic society is not controlled by external authority but by powers which it has itself created. Its rulers are its servants; they are elected by the group. In a democratic society the divine would be only a power that is fundamentally humanity itself. As Hobhouse writes, "Humanity as the spirit of harmony and expanding life, shaping the best actions of the best men and women, is the highest incarnation known to us of the divine. If, indeed, we come to the conclusion that God is, and are asked what He is, we may reply that God, is that of which the highest known embodiment is the distinctive spirit of Humanity."¹ If one takes this viewpoint the conception of God is that of a finite purposive will (but a purposive will susceptible of development) struggling, suffering and striving with us in the cause of universal evolution. He is the embodiment of the developing social consciousness of humanity - a product of the social process itself and growing and developing in the social order.

¹ Hobhouse, Development and Purpose, p.271.

The thoroughgoing functionalist as Ames and Geiger eliminate entirely the ontological reality of God. His supernatural element has entirely disappeared and He has only functional value as a symbol of our social valuations and is entirely devoid of cosmic powers or control.

The democratic, scientific spirit will gradually we may believe bring about some such change in the conception of God. The religious spirit will probably continue to use much the same concepts but gradually new thoughts will change their content. Jesus of Nazareth will probably continue to occupy much the same place as today in life. The expression the Ideal Christ, the Christ of Experience, the Growing Christ; all these are indications of interesting developments. They show that the central figure of Christianity is not the historical Jesus alone, but a growing symbol, largely functional, to which are attached as they develop, our highest valuations. He is the figure around which cluster all the finest developments of our ethical consciousness. To most of us the right best presents itself in terms of concrete personality rather than in abstract thought. It carries in this way more warmth and emotional value. The metaphysical, supernatural , Christ, the subject of endless theological discussion will lose its interest; the growing idealism built around the historical Jesus and embodying our highest values, our noblest purposes will continue to make him the very center of Christianity and its greatest asset.

This growing developing conception of reality means likewise that religion will not look primarily to the past but to the future for its standards of action. Not by exegesis of authoritative documents of the past will one find the norm of action but in the study of present day situations. This means a methodology built upon scientific experiment. The trial and error method of democracy rather than the authoritative, infallible method of the past must become a part of the religious life. The ultimate values of human life are the products of human relationship and as such have their basis in the actual social order, not in some reality beyond experience. Democracy means freedom to experiment and its application to the field of religion must carry with it the same implications. Freedom of inquiry, the right to modify anything however sacred if it promises better control of the future; the recognition of doubt as the growing point of knowledge; these are demands which Christianity must face in a democratic world. Instead of trying to silence new voices that speak for change, it should welcome all sincere experiments in belief and practice - trusting to the scientific test of serviceableness to discredit or to accept them.

This of course means that Christianity must develop a new type of religious assurance. Uncertainty, doubts and questionings, unsettled beliefs were looked upon with scant sympathy by the old religious faith. But democracy and modern science know no finalities, no absolute certainties; everything is in the process of change. Absolute dogmatic certainty,

so often vouched for as the highest mark of a vital religious experience - this is impossible in a world of evolution and change. A democracy believes in risks; it is the great adventure; and knows progress is achieved in that way. Doubt is one of its greatest virtues. Can Christianity become willing to risk, to make venture of faith, to make new postulates conditioned on scientific verification ? It must face this challenge for the scientific method and the democratic movement go hand in hand and both declare there is no final verification except that of life itself. As Professor Smith of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago says, "Theology has insisted that its right to a hearing lay in the fact that it proclaimed truths from a higher realm, inaccessible to human reason. The confidence of the theologian has rested on the belief that there has been given to men without the mediation of inexact and tiresome processes of exploration, certain absolutely true principles which may eternally serve without change as a means of guiding life to its supreme goal... Confidence is located in the infallibility and unchangeability of certain doctrinal theories, rather than in human methods of discovery..... The assurance of the theologian has thus rested on the possibility of affirming the unchangeable truth of certain doctrines. The assurance of the scientist rests on the possibility of verifying or of revising all doctrines by the use of exact methods of research."¹ The democratic assurance of experimentation thru trial and

¹ Smith, Social Idealism and the Changing Theology, pp.166-167.

error is the assurance that must become the assurance of religious life. By their actual service to human life shall their validity be tested.

The democratic implication of the nature of man is distinctly tied up with this doctrine of religious assurance. The Church doctrine of man as a dependant, as a being by his nature incapable of progress except thru grace bestowed on him from outside sources is repugnant to our democratic feelings. The sense of power which has come to man thru his scientific conquests have developed in him a sense of courage, a feeling of optimism that faces the tasks of the world, strong in the conviction that he is not a helpless dependant, the victim of unmanageable forces or powers, but that he is able to achieve his ends and to make over a plastic world into the Kingdom of God. A religion which has discovered the real inner meaning of democracy must exalt man, must believe in man's power and in his capacity for achievement and that he and he only has the power to create a world more amenable to his control and more satisfying for his higher life. Such a conception will not breed an easy going optimism that believes "God's in His heavens, all's well with the world"; neither will it stamp inferiority on the brow of man by declaring him a helpless dependant on outside grace; rather will it seek to generate in men a new courage in their powers of achievement thru the realization that this is a plastic world out of which men by cooperation and effort and intelligent application of science can bring in a new order of social righteousness.

There is a new day coming into the religious world as well as in the other fields of human activity. The power the church will exert in this new day will depend upon its power of adjustment. A democratic world cannot rest satisfied with an autocratic religion. The stirring is clearly evident in the field of practical religious life. The advance of the same spirit into the intellectual citadels of the faith is already taking place. This means an entire reconstruction of the faith, a reconstruction more vital and far reaching than that which Luther occasioned. The revision of its creeds and rituals, the development of new loyalties and new symbols, and the energizing of old conceptions with new meaning; this work calls for the best intellectual and prophetic leadership of the Church. The hope of modern theology lies in the future in this direction. The task may seem difficult, almost revolutionary; the results at first apparently cold and lacking the rich emotional significance of the old doctrines, but with time there will come the gradual accretion of rich emotional values which were found in the old conceptions. "Religion will still persist as a powerful driving force in life, but it will be far from the awed, quiescent, resigned, appealing worship of a supernatural power. It will be rather a practical loyalty to human ideals and values. Its cult will be the web of civilization, the vast, multiform organization by which social programs may be carried thru. Its dreams of future glory will keep close

to the bounds of a scientific prediction, yet: the wonderful growth of scientific control leaves wide windows of hope open to man. It may be that the innermost secrets of life and of death may at last unfold before his persistent¹ inquiry and unfaltering toil."

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Haydon, The Theological Trend of Pragmatism, Am. Journal of Theology, Vol. 23, pp. 413-414.

CHAPTER VI

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF A DEMOCRATICALLY ORGANIZED RELIGION.

"Any kind of a Church, so far as now generally conceived, is a selective group, a close corporation, organized to exclude more than to include, applying tests which draw lines of cleavage thru the social fabric. Democracy cannot permanently tolerate this sort of an institution in handling interests of universal significance."

McAfee, Religion and the New American Democracy, p. 43.

CHAPTER VI.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF A DEMOCRATICALLY ORGANIZED RELIGION.

The last chapter indicated the results to be expected in the formulation of religious doctrine in an age dominated by democratic and scientific ideas. The aim of the present chapter will be to briefly consider some of the changes which one may expect to take place in the actual life of the religious organization. All this of course can be only suggestive. No one can formulate any rigidly exact definition of what the organized religious community will do in the future. Social conditions, by their changes, may widely modify any of the practical religious activities, so that what is suggested will only broadly consider certain changes which a democratically organized Christianity is reasonably certain to eventually bring to pass.

From the point of view which has been developed in this study "the function of religion in its social practice in general may be said to be the maintenance of such a direct and vital contact with the divine as to induce the acceptance and practice of the standards of values embodied therein."¹ Thus the work of the Church would not be primarily to instil in the minds of the people a knowledge of the Bible, nor to secure their salvation, using the term in the traditional sense, to some other-worldly type of existence; rather its task would be to inculcate an appreciation of the highest spiritual values of our own day. It would seek to give validity and reality to

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Geiger, Some Religious Implications of Pragmatism, p. 50.

the present day social valuations; valuations which we believe are found in the very heart of democracy. A Church Cope defines as "a group of persons associated and cooperating for the sake of personal or spiritual values.... In the Christian religion the Church is a group of persons polarized at the personal ideal of Jesus and the social ideals he taught."¹ As has been already shown, we can expect in a country with a Christian social heritage, the highest valuations of democracy to "polarize" for multitudes of people around the personal ideal of Jesus, from Him they will be given a greatly increased authority.

In the future we can expect profound changes to take place in religious practice. Already it is evident in the field of religious education. The old type of revivalism is fast disappearing. The study of church statistics reveals the fact that the pro rata loss in Church and Sunday School Membership was the highest among the revivalistic denominations, as the Methodists, and the least among those where religious education is being widely developed and a more progressive liberalism is becoming evident.² The educational program of the Church is coming to be recognized as the great function of the religious organization. The Sunday School has been considered chiefly as a place where the Bible was to be taught and the young indoctrinated in the religious dogmas of the church. This biblical work was very poorly done. Scarcely any social

¹ Cope, Religious Education in the Church, p. 50.

² See the Christian Century Editorial, May 6, 1920
Revivalism and Church Statistics.

implications were presented with the teaching and the knowledge acquired was fragmentary, inadequate and of little value. The new conception of religious education is concerned with the equipment of individuals for a life of social usefulness. The works of Betts,¹ Coe,² Cope,³ to mention only a few that have been published in late years are developed from the social standpoint. The social interpretation of the Christian message is at the background of all their work. Religious education, as religion itself, has been brought out of the clouds of metaphysics and supernaturalism and made a part of the concrete social life of the day. This is in exact line with the thesis which we are developing. The aim of the best religious educators of today is to train individuals so that they can realize their lives in a democratic organization of human society. Such education is of course essentially a social process. "Education, then, is the directed development of persons into the full experience of all their social universe. Specifically, religious education is training and instruction in the life of the larger, infinite spiritual society."⁴ The aim of such education will not be to impose truth, or to indoctrinate the children, but rather to promote growth in realization of ones place in the social

¹ Betts, The Teaching of Religion.

² Coe, A Social Theory of Religious Education.

³ Cope, Religious Education in the Church.

⁴ Cope, *ibid*, p. 36.

whole of which each of us is a part. It will seek to present social motive and to fuse the thought of sacred into that of the secular so that one can see the divine in the present day task as well as in the past. To develop such a consciousness material need not be derived solely or even largely from the Bible. Anything that can be of service in developing the spirit of socialization and cooperation can well find a place here. Garibaldi, Lincoln, Mazzini and others, great liberators of the human spirit, can well take their place alongside Isaiah, David, Paul and others as inspirers of our generation. The effort of Christian religious education, as indeed of all education, will be to cause the "pupils' social attachments to expand from narrower to wider groups". This means that such expanding social consciousness shall be developed in social activities of concrete kinds. It should be taught that "the social issues of the present, then, must be taken as the call of God to our pupils, as the sphere of entire consecration to the will of God."¹ With the more mature students~~ss~~ attention might well be centered upon current economic, political, and social development. Material from every field of life and thought might well be used if it helps to create social idealism and growth in social consciousness.

The missionary activity of organized Christianity need by no means suffer thru the changed viewpoint. There will still be a desire to propagate the high ideals which are held. The old idea of a missionary as one who goes out with an

¹
Coe, *ibid*, p. 58.

absolute, authoritative religion, seeking to replace a false religion will disappear, but will be replaced by a broadly humanitarian viewpoint which will seek to work thru moral cooperation. It will put its work on the broad basis of attempted social reconstruction of the life of a people. It would seek to make the Golden Rule the principle of world life. It would look upon the educational and administrative work which our government is doing in the Phillipines as distinctly missionary work. Anything in fact that worked for the democratic organization of the world would be part of the religious task. The missionary program would thus come to be conceived of as the great endeavor of social idealism to propagate its spiritual values. Already the old thought of the missionary service as an attempt to rescue a few souls from the darkness of heathenism is giving away to this twentieth century idea of it as the great force of social reconstruction representative of the democratic idealism of American civilization.

Neither is it necessary to believe that the religious reconstruction here pointed out calls for such a development of the social service side that the worshipful and appreciative aspect of the church would lose its significance. True, worship in so far as it rests on any priestly manipulation of the divine or supernatural mysteries will disappear but there will be developed a newer and finer type of symbols built on the psychological needs of human life. Symbols are necessary to all thought. The development of symbols that shall adequately represent the democratic idealism of our day

constitutes one of our greatest needs. As Geiger declares, "the forms of worship employed by conventional religion not only fails to affect any appreciative contact with contemporary social values with the social control that should follow therefrom; these forms actually serve to inhibit the progressive and constructive tendencies in the experience of the worshipper, and to reinforce the conservative and non-progressive tendencies..... They reflect a social system long since left behind. They represent the hypostization of conditions of dependence and limitations which we know refuse to recognize as belonging to the nature of things, much less to set up as religious ideals. They place a premium upon such things as blind credulity, simple child like faith, abject dependence, and dumb acquiescence. They contemplate a source of good and an order of values whose control is capricious and arbitrary. They presuppose a moral dualism which, if accepted by the worshiper, must disrupt his experience, and make it impossible for him to be at one with himself. Finally, they induce a type of righteousness that is self-complacent and condescending, and whose fruits are the various forms of social service."¹

The church should never rest content to be simply a center of social welfare. It can never adequately do even that service unless it develops formulae, rites and ceremonies that shall serve as means for communicating the sentiments, ideals, and meanings of the great democratic valuations. As Coit writes,

¹ Geiger, *ibid*, pp. 58-53.

"Until the new idealism is possessed of its own manual of religious ritual, it cannot communicate effectively its deeper thought and purpose. The moment however, it has invented such a means of communication, it would seem inevitable that a rapid moral and intellectual advancement of man must at last take place, equal in speed and beneficence to the material advancement which followed during the last century in the wake of scientific invention. Only the instrument for the storage and transmission of the new idealism has been lacking."¹

The development of a social democratic ritual which can give to the values of our own day the same warmth of emotional significance and idealism that we have developed in relation to old Jewish valuations will prove a powerful factor in religious development. The inability to see the religious values developing in our own day; the failure to see God moving in the life of our own time as much as in the life of ancient Israel; these are due primarily to the fact that we have not devised new symbols and imagery that carry emotional satisfaction and moral inspiration. The failure to see the values of ones own day; the feeling that only the Jews were a chosen people; these constitute the real heresy of the religious life. Democracy and science can never have religious significance until they attain to such emotional and idealistic value. The differentia between ethics and religion appears right at this point. It is difficult to carry an ethics to the rank and file of the people; the same social values however

embodied in religion and given proper symbolic instruments thru which to work may prove a tremendous power. The centuries of idealization which has been carried on in the history of the Hebrew people has given a warmth and color to its social valuation far beyond its merit. Our use of the Bible to the practical exclusion of all other material from our religious life has served to centralize our attention on this predemocratic/social conditions. A purely biblical religion is apt for that reason to be an undemocratic and unprogressive religious faith. We must develop a feeling of worth as regards our own democratic valuations if the power of religion is not to continue to be an undemocratic and unprogressive force. Art, music, drama, poetry and sculpture must all be made to carry the great spiritual values of the day and thus minister to the religious life. .

The development of a community church of some type may well be the result of this democratic movement. The desire for cooperation today, as seen in such efforts as the Federal Council of the Churches of North America, and the Interchurch World Movement, bear witness that in the future sectarianism is going to have a less conspicuous part. With the increased knowledge of the nature of religion as a real product of our own life and world and something not supernatural - the differences which seem to some today so vital will drop away and persons will be united together in a positive creed of service. Already evidences are at hand of the development of such a community church movement. It seems to the writer that

the movement which is centering about John Haynes Holmes, formerly pastor of the Church of the Messiah of New York City but recently turned into a community church, represents the natural flowering of the democratic movement. A brief study of the community church plan such as Holmes is seeking to develop will reveal its democratic nature.

¹ The community church is undenominational in that it has no affiliation with any sectarian body, and is the direct outgrowth of the community itself. It has no creed because it leaves all matters of theological belief to the individual and recognizes citizenship in the community as constituting membership. It puts the basis of religion in man not God and interprets religion in terms of social idealism which the democratic and scientific spirit may develop. The best expression of it would probably be that it "is first and foremost the community expressing and organizing itself in terms of religious experience". It is not a Union Church nor a Federated Church as so many think - it is more than these. It is the universal religious spirit finding free outlet in a free organization rather than in a selective closed group. It is as McAfee says, "Democracy building its own religious institutions." Needless to say such a community church would draw no distinction between Jew and Gentile, Protestant or Catholic, Pagan or Christian, for it will properly speaking be simply religious. In a society such as ours which is

¹ See for Community Church, Holmes, The Community Church, Unity, Vol. 84, No. 3, p.37.

predominately Christian it will as Holmes declares probably be Christian. If it grows out of a community which has a Christian social heritage, it will as representative of the community be a Christian Institution. "Where the citizens all accept Jesus as their saviour or leader, the church which they sustain as fellow members will naturally be dedicated to the service of the Nazarene. As he is already to the individual experience of the men and women concerned, the personal incarnation of spiritual idealism, so will he naturally be to them as the headstone of the church edifice. Naturally nothing else is possible, if the community church is to be true to itself as the embodiment of the religious side of the community life. As well expect a public school to teach Hebrew to the children of Gentiles, or the public library to gather French books for the reading of an English-speaking town, as to expect a community church to remove Jesus from the high pinnacle of his unique spiritual eminence in a community where no other prophet of the free spirit is known or adored."¹ However the community church, as we can foresee, would overleap Christianity itself, in that it seeks to give embodiment to the universal religious feeling. If the community is Jewish then it will not be a Christian Community Church, if the community were Buddhistic then it would probably center its idealism around the figure of Guatama. Only the community itself sets the limit or the type. It would represent the highest development of social idealism of the group out of which it developed.

¹
Holmes, The Community Church and Christianity, Unity, Vol 75, p.69.

In a democracy it would seek to develop an appreciation of democracy and a loyalty and devotion to the common welfare. It will seek to give an element of religious devotion to the common welfare of humanity and to develop intelligent citizenship as a religious duty.

Religion of the type developed in this paper makes possible religious instruction in our public schools. All clear thinking men realize the loss which has resulted and is resulting from the exclusion of religion from our public educational institutions. Such exclusion however was the only thing that could be done under our present supernatural, creedal type of religious life. As Dewey says, "Bearing the losses and inconveniences of our time as best we may, it is the part of men to labor persistently and patiently for the clarification and development of the positive creed of life implicit in democracy and science, and to work for the transformation of all practical instrumentalities of education till they are in harmony with these ideas. Till these ends are further along than we can honestly claim them to be at present, it is better that our schools should do nothing than that they should do wrong things. It is better for them to confine themselves to their obviously urgent tasks than that they should, under the name of spiritual culture, form habits of mind which are at war with the habits of mind congruous with democracy and science.... So far as education is concerned, those who believe in religion as a natural expression of human experience must devote themselves to the development of the ideas of life

which lie implicit in our still new science and our still newer democracy. They must interest themselves in the transformation of those institutions which still bear the dogmatic and feudal stamp till they are in accord with these ideas."¹

The attempt of the writer has been to do just this thing. He hopes that he has made explicit some of the ideas which he believes are to be found in this new democracy, and has shown their place as a real part of the religious life. He believes progress lies in that direction. An autocratic, reactionary, unscientific religious organization constitutes a real menace in a democratic, scientific world. If religion is to continue to exist as a vital reality in our life and serve to its best twentieth century men, it must in the opinion of the writer be moulded in accordance with the scientific and democratic demands of the day. To such a task the prophetic spirits of the church in this generation must dedicate themselves for it is impossible that an autocratic, feudal religion can function to its highest in a democratic world.

¹
Dewey, Religion and Our Schools, Hibbert Journal, Vol. 6,
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